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J. Randy Forbes
United States Congress

4th District, Virginia
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The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary, Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for your continued and admirable leadership and commitment to our men and women in uniform.

Families of servicemembers experience many hardships while on active duty. The continual reassignment of active duty personnel, both in the U.S. and overseas, serves as both a source of satisfaction and hardship for many servicemembers. For instance, it is possible in some cases that a military dependent whose family recently PCS'd may not qualify for in-state tuition rates in the state in which they live, as they often do not meet state residency requirements. Many states, including Virginia, permit dependents whose parents are on PCS orders in that state to receive in-state tuition rates. Unfortunately, not all states provide such a benefit, and many states terminate this benefit for the student if the military parent receives PCS orders to another state. To learn more about this challenge, I would be interested to know if servicemembers have inquired about this inequity and what response, if any, the Department of Defense has given. I also request that an information paper be produced in response to the following questions:

- 1) How many military families (or estimate) annually PCS within one year of a dependent's high school graduation date?
- 2) What are the matriculation rates of military dependents who graduate high school? What is the rate for military dependents who graduate in the U.S. versus those who graduate high school overseas?
- 3) What percentages of military dependents pay in state tuition vs. the percentage of the student population at large?
- 4) Of the military dependents who attend college immediately after graduating high school, what is the tuition rate they receive and what is their home of residence?
- 5) Are there any special considerations/incentives provided by the Federal government or certain state governments for military dependents graduating high school who are dependents of servicemembers stationed overseas (accompanied tours)?

Our nations' servicemembers have my deepest admiration. When I meet with these brave men and women and ask them what we can do for them, I am always struck by how many of them ask us not to give them something, but simply that we take care of their families so they can keep serving. It is important to me that when it comes to college education, dependents of servicemembers are not put at a disadvantage simply because their parents moved more frequently or at an inconvenient time.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


J. RANDY FORBES
Member of Congress